

PUPPETEERS OF AMERICA

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LEND AN EAR

Once upon a time, there was a young lady named Natalie Hackenschmidt who liked to do things with her hands. She could knit and tat, and crochet and all that, but what she wanted was a really SATISFYING hobby.

Last year, while Natalie was doing her Christmas shopping, she got caught up in a crowd, and before she could shove her way out, she was jammed up against a store window watching a puppet show. It fascinated her! In fact, she stood there, in the freezing cold, for the 17 shows until finally she had to go home in a taxi. That was the beginning of Miss Hackenschmidt's hobby.

She set about to make one of those cute little dolls like they had in the store window, and because she was so good with her hands it was finished in no time flat. At a New Year's Eve party, Natalie knocked 'em dead. While the radio played, she jiggled the doll for all her friends, and then they jiggled it back so she could see, and everybody said she was so clever she ought to be on television.

Well, the very next day, Natalie went down to the Library to find out more about this puppet business. They gave her the Encyclopedia Britannica and the Reader's Guide. It was historical! She had never dreamed, for instance, that the Egyptians had had puppets. It made her stop and wonder why it took all these years for the word to get around. Puppetry was older even than knitting and crocheting! Right then, Natalie was in business.

She rented a four car garage, but she didn't know where to begin. She questioned artists about casting, plagued carpenters about joints, and badgered manufacturers about plastics, until she found the answers. It was a struggle. Today it's a different story. All of Natalie's puppets have animated fingers and toes - worked out by a mechanical friend. Their finish is as smooth as glass - in fact, it is glass, put on by a secret dipping process, and the rubber joints are invisible. She has developed a formula for making heads of asbestos and Portland cement that is practically indestructable. In a newspaper interview, she admitted that it was an awful lot of hard work, and she was discouraged and undecided about continuing construction for her "Hansel and Gretel."

I didn't catch her address, but if any of you know Natalie Hackenschmidt, why not tell her about the P of A?

REVIEWS

THE MANTEO FAMILY

After nearly ten years absence, Papa Manteo's Life-Size Marionettes returned to English and Italian-speaking audiences in New York with two performances of "The Life of Genovefa."

The play - in four acts and some 18 scenes - tells of Genovefa's wedding to Sigisfredo, his conquests against the Moors, and Genovefa's imprisonment by the villain, Golo. Two ruffians, hired by Golo to kill Genovefa, are softened by her appeals and leave her in the forest. A deer leads her and her infant son to refuge in a cave. Seven years later, Sigisfredo discovers her while hunting, and there is a happy reunion. The devil descends in spurts of flame and smoke and takes Golo to his just desserts. The Manteo puppets are between 4 and 5 feet tall, and weigh from 60 to 100 pounds. Control is achieved mainly by a vertical steel rod anchored in the head. A hook at the upper end serves both as a handle for the operator, and a hanging hook between scenes. Another steel rod wired to the right wrist (sword hand) gives surprising control over hand and arm movements. A cord to the left hand is used only occasionally. There are no leg controls. Walking is accomplished by rocking the marionettes from side to side, permitting the legs to swing. Marionettes of similar size and construction - common in Italy - were seen in the Italian movie "Paisan."

The audience found the Manteo show a rare and exciting experience. A program in English, giving the basic action and locale of each scene, permitted those of us who didn't understand Italian to follow the play. Though we missed some of the jokes, we were treated to all the dramatic values of the play - scenes of tenderness and grief, happiness, excitement, villainy - greatly enhanced by the eloquent, heroic gestures which the unique system of control permits. Embraces, arms akimbo, solid thumping of fists against armored chests, hands to forehead in thought — such "un-puppet like" actions greatly enhanced the dramatic situations and added zest and vigor to the performance.

The high spot in the show was the battle scene between the Moors and Sigisfredo and his comrades. Amid tumultuous clashing of armor and slashing of swords, some ten armored knights were beheaded and their bodies heaped upon the stage before the Moors were finally vanquished. Some of the family's three hundred puppets were created by Michael Manteo, grandfather of those who gave the performance. His son, known familiarly as Papa Manteo, grew up in Sicily, where he learned to make and operate puppets in his father's theatre. When his father died, Papa Manteo took over the theatre, which he later moved to Argentina and then to New York City, where it was established in his home on Mulberry

Street. As his daughter and three sons grew up, they played with him. For nearly twenty-five years, the Manteos gave performances seven nights a week, while Papa earned his living as an electrical contractor. The puppet shows, he said, "helped keep the family together." The performances were given in the traditional style in Italian. The play, "Orlando Furioso", took almost three years to perform. A new episode in the cycle was presented every night.

The young Manteos wish to revive their late father's puppet shows, possibly in English. An episode of "Orlando Furioso" is planned in January. We're certain that all P of A members—some of whom will doubtless remember the Manteos as one of the highlights of the New York Festival - will join in wishing them the greatest success.

KENT & LOUISE MORE

SMALL WONDERS

In December, New Yorkers saw puppetry at a stand still! In a handsomely staged exhibition titled "Small Wonders", the Cooper Union Museum presented puppets past and present from at home and abroad. Included in the month-long display were hand puppets, marionettes, finger puppets, and rod and shadow puppets.

The world's famous puppet characters were represented, from Polichinelle of 17th century Italy through Punch and Judy, Dr. Faust and Charlemagne's knights, to the modern figures by Frank Paris, Bil Baird and the Andersons. From the generous Kingsland Marionette Collection came many of the historic and foreign figures as well as original drawings by the late Tony Sarg for his "Alice in Wonderland" and "Rip Van Winkle." Also included were watercolors of early American Punch and Judy, and the Robert Edmond Jones drawings of "Oedipus Rex" in which the late Remo Bufano's puppets participated.

Of particular interest was a display by George Nelle showing the various steps of puppet making, from the casting of plastic wood in plaster molds to the assembled undressed puppet. Carroll French's figures caught the eye with their satiric, "moderne" styling. A marionette group constructed by Mildred May Osgood of wire framework covered with net had a fragile, "never-never" charm. The simple, imaginative design of Gayle and Doug Anderson's marionettes was refreshing to behold.

To show puppets in action, the Museum sponsored Saturday performances by the Berkeley Marionettes, Caroline and Otto Kunze and Basil Milovsoroff. During the week, films were shown on puppet construction, as well as the "stop-action" puppet film "The Princess and the Dragon" made in Poland with its own musical score and English commentary. A partial listing of exhibitors included Alice E. Fox, Pauline Benton, the Manteo family, Sue Hastings, Inc., Rufus Rose, Tibor Nagy, and Esther Wolff.

I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET

BOB BAKER

In California, there is a dark-haired, intense, young puppeteer who has been in business most of his 25 years. He is Bob Baker of Hollywood. Bob saw his first puppet show at a Los Angeles department store when he was five. At seven, he purchased two puppets, and at eight gave his first professional show for Mervyn LeRoy.

While studying with The Colonial Marionettes (he was then ten), Bob learned to make his own puppets. Three years later he was building complete acts, puppets and props for professional touring companies. That same year he opened a school of puppetry. After a year in the Army, Bob was hospitalized out of service, and went to work for George Pal (Puppetoons). He did construction, animation, scripts—and janitor's chores. "The only thing I didn't do," he says, "was the first lay-out on paper or 'paper animation'."

After a year with Pal, nineteen-year-old Baker went into business for himself. He had been advised that manufacturing commercial puppetry was a poor business risk, but with little capital and a small shop he began. In six and a half years the business had forty employees, a large shop, and 60,000 puppets to its credit. Seven and a half hours of labor went into each of the twenty-two different characters — in fact, they were their own best competitors. The sales representative for the commercial figures was the same sales-lady who sold Bob his first puppets at Bullock's Wilshire almost 18 years ago.

Last year Bob had his own TV show "The Adventures of Bobo." It had a nine months' stand on Television until the station changed its programming.

Why do people become puppeteers? Bob explains his reasons this way: "I had always wanted to have a theatre, but no one wanted to play games so I established a small puppet theatre that operated here for a short time. I also saw that I could incorporate all my hobbies into my work which I love so much."

Bob is probably proudest of his production of the circus. He admits being greatly influenced by Prof. Teschner, the New York stage and Walt Disney. "I had to do a circus that would be different!" he says. "I wanted the flavor of circus, but without the smell of sawdust. I got a good Disney man to lay out the story — hired a full symphony orchestra to record the music, and a New York designer to do the costumes and color continuity for the show. I got top people, sculptors, puppet makers, costumers, etc. Twenty five people worked five and a half months to turn out the show. The cast had about 200 puppets for 30 minutes. We

had to cut the original hour show using 350 puppets. Five puppeteers handled the show. The lighting was worked out by Otto K. Ocseov (he lights the skys in Hollywood) — 50 different color combinations for thirty minutes. The forty foot stage had two levels — one for the prologue, the other for the show. We used mechanical processes, i.e., a band, butterfly girls spinning during the trapeze number, etc. This show played four weeks — 11 performances a day."

Bob says the production proved many things: "The field of puppets has not been scratched. We are only doing surface things, and great things are in store for us all."

PUPPETRY IN EDUCATION

VIVIAN MICHAEL

Maybe that's what you think, but this article "ain't goin' to have no education in it." Period!!!

You see, since the Journal is printed near my home, George trusts me, and lets me insert my article with out his blue pencil . . well, he probably won't do that again. I'm supposed to write an article about exhibit cases or something . . . what was it George?

Now get ready for the fireworks!

The entire P of A membership has to get down to brass tacks about this new Journal. We've staked some of your money in this venture and it HAS TO PAY DIVIDENDS. The transition from a mimeo sheet to a printed Journal was not easy and took time. It isn't the world's best publication but you know and I know it is better than a mimeo sheet and carries more prestige in your estimation. It is bound to have a better effect on strangers and prospective members. Frankly, neither George nor I know anything about printing a magazine, but we are learning and learning fast. We got off with a bum start, George traveling all over the universe and having to edit as he went didn't make for speed . . . and we had backfires . . . nice tactful ones, and some . . . well, let's pass those up.

However, we hope to double up, and when you receive this copy we will be almost on schedule, even if you do get them all in a bunch.

After a lot of figuring, and a consultation with the printer we found that the printed issues were not more costly than the mimeo sheets, and we can finance the Journal at about the same figure as the Grapevine. We are safe on that score, and a lot of new members are coming in. In addition we are setting up a paid ad column which will help financially. The first three issues are going to carry about the same makeup as we are working against time. Then if you will get your gripes in to us, and an occasional constructive criticism, we hope to improve with every

issue. By the end of the year we hope to have improved the Journal to a point where we can point to it with considerable pride

BUT

GEORGE CAN'T DO THIS WITHOUT YOUR CO-OPERATION.

He has written so many people asking for articles that he is blue in the face from exhaustion. And what does he get????? Not enough material to fill the Journal . . . 16 pages of it. Copies will go out to nearly 400 members this issue and at least half of you **COULD** write an article. Don't you like to see your name in print? He'd like to give everyone a chance, and preference will be given to articles of about 450 words . . . but if you can't say it in that time, send it anyway. And we need those little notices of events . . . scraps of information about a new material or gadget you have found . . . and Steve wants to know what you are doing for "Under the Bridge." My gosh, have you all gone out of the puppet business?

JUNIOR LEAGUE

INDIANAPOLIS COMMUNITY PUPPET THEATER

Marionettes first came into being for the Junior League of Indianapolis in 1935. The Director of the Art Museum asked the League if it would consider doing short, simple plays to stimulate the children's interest in the museum. We did several plays until gas rationing forced us to disband for the duration. In 1945, we received a request from the Department of Parks and Recreation to produce puppet shows for its teen-agers. A small group of members, "who didn't know a thing about puppets", but who were most enthusiastic about learning, did the job.

Gloria Chandler of the Junior Leagues' staff advised the League to reorganize the marionette group, not as a purely League project, but one for any interested member of the community. To launch the idea, Jean Wiksell was invited to conduct a Puppetry Institute, to which the Community was invited. The response was so gratifying, we were convinced that the plan would work. The Community Puppet Theatre and Workshop was born. The League provides the place, materials, and equipment. Anyone interested in puppets is welcome to join.

Then came the struggle to secure a workshop in a centrally located spot. Through the cooperation of the school board, we were able to obtain a garage behind the Rauh Memorial Library. The League remodeled it

into one large room. It holds our stage, working equipment, and seats approximately fifty people for small performances. We retain it rent free but are responsible for the utilities and the upkeep.

The construction group meets every week. One group costumes the puppets, another builds the sets. The construction period varies with each production depending upon the amount of research and the number of sets and puppets to be built. Rehearsals last for several weeks before we begin our weekly performances, free of charge, in the public schools. Two complete casts are ready at all times for substitutions. The back stage crew includes prompter, electrician and musician. A paid professional worker teaches four weekly classes.

The project has been most successful, but like all other volunteer enterprises needs careful planning. Four factors worth passing on are these:

1. Choose a centrally located workshop. The more accessible it is for children and community people the more interest you will have.
2. Be sure you have financial resources available to carry it through.
3. Get enthusiastic volunteers.
4. Send someone from your community to the Puppetry Festival.

It is a grand way to obtain information and inspires a great deal of interest.

KAY SCHROEDER

TRICK PUPPETS

FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!

Montana Slim, our crying, Guitar playing Cowboy, really gets sad when he sings "I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes." Slim has a metal hat — "tin" to be exact. The brim is the bottom of a large tin can, with a band soldered around the hole cut in the center. The crown is a piece of .020" copper, spun on a wood lathe. The crown should fit snugly over the band. His head is hollow, and is cut off just above his hat band.

The "tears" are contained in a "tin can" reservoir fitted down into his head as shown on the sketch. A piece of 5/8" diameter brass tube (No. 2), 1" long with a bottom soldered in it, is soldered to the center of the bottom of the reservoir (No. 2) which is a "tin can" 2" in dia. and 2" high. Two pieces of 1/8" outside diamond copper tubing (No. 3) 1½" long are soldered in the ½" tube approximately 1/8" from the bottom end. These 2 tubes lead to a place just beneath the center of each eye. We found by trial and error this is the best location for the openings. If they are placed in the inner corner of the eyes the tears run down the puppet's nose and drop off in a single stream; if placed under the center of the eyes they



John Conway and Bill Clark of Vancouver, B. C. play hand puppet shows for adult audiences. For the recent Design for Living Display at the Art Gallery, they designed a recreation room puppet theatre.



Sneak preview of the Western College Campus at Oxford, Ohio where the 1950 Puppetry Festival will be held. This is Mary Lyon Residence Hall where puppeteers will be housed.



"The Merry-Maker Marionettes" sponsored by Rev. Felix G. Davis. The group is building a new stage of professional size. Above, (L. to R.) Margaret Almond, Ronald Bailey and Carolyn McGee.



BET YOU THOUGHT I WAS "TIED UP" TONIGHT!



BOBO discovers his family tree in Mills & Dunn



**b
o
baker**

fall in two realistic streams. When the tubes are installed and the ends filed even with the face, they are scarcely noticeable.

The stopper (No. 4) is a plug made of 3/4" brass rod, 3/4" of it turned down to fit loosely in the 5/8" tube, leaving approximately 1/2" long full size. Cut a washed (No. 5), similar to a garden hose washer, of soft rubber and place it over the plug to act as a seal. Place a cross member of 1/16" brass 3/8" wide across the top of the reservoir with a hole to guide the "Crying String" (No. 7) which is attached to a convenient point on the controller. Tie a small ring (No. 8) in the "Crying String" at such a point to allow the stopper to lift 1/4", allowing the tears to flow but not allowing the stopper to be pulled completely out. This allows the puppet to shed a few tears, then later to shed a few more. In other words, you are able to "Turn 'em on" and "turn 'em off."

To load, lift the crown of his hat off and fill reservoir with water. We add a small amount of milk to the tears whenever Slim is on TV, since water does not televise well.

JOE OWENS

UNDER THE BRIDGE

Martin Stevens, Middlebury, Ind.

One of our members says this took place as quoted, just the other day: Scene - a hotel lobby. Puppeteer: "Could you tell me where the State School is?" Clerk: "Well, there are two; one for crippled children, and one is the insane asylum." Puppeteer: "You see, we are giving a puppet show." Clerk: "Puppet show? Then you undoubtedly want the insane asylum."

Burr Tillstrom, who is pretty terrific himself, says he saw the SALICIS on television a while back, and they were terrific! . . . VIVIAN MICHAEL and PEG BLICKLE have a new TV show which is going great guns in Columbus, Ohio, on WBNS, the Columbus Dispatch station. Leading man is "Chris" — natch. They're also doing a movie tele commercial. They're also doing the Junior Community Theatre Dec. production series plus an original school play, "A Bad Little Angel." Seems to me some people do more than is believeable! . . .

WILLIAM H. CLEVELAND, George School, Pa., plugged P of A in a puppet article in the November issue of "The Allied Youth", a Washington D. C. monthly . . . PAPA MANTEO'S "life-sized" Sicilian puppets are back on the boards, after "a seven year abdication." They opened December 8 at James Center Auditorium, New York City, in "The Life of Genovefa", with LEO and RITZ MANTEO operating, assisted by ANGELLO GRILLO. Female voice, AIDA GRILLO, director and male voice, MICHAEL CATALANO. Pianist, DOLORES MANTEO. They are open for outside engagements.

The COOPER UNION MUSEUM, New York City, did a somewhat whopping puppet exhibit in November, aided by practically every puppeteer of note in the East, most of whom lent exhibits, did shows, et cetera. Cooper Union is to be congratulated on a large and well presented effort.

FRANK PARIS played at the "Palace" recently. Is it true that he is the man behind JOHN BEGG'S "Ballet Theatre for Children" recently organized and touring the country?

JAMES JUVENAL HAYES, who evolved the system of puppet classification Paul McPharlin used in "Puppetry" is interested in all sorts of simplifications and clarifications, including a new World Calendar, and a Fonet-ik Ing-lish.

S. P. A. C., the Chicago group of puppetry enthusiasts, is still rolling along, with HELEN YORK, Maywood, Illinois, as president.

The PROCTORS played the Fair at Indianapolis again—a regular stint with them.

This is pretty obvious, but it may have slipped your mind: Have you thought of giving puppets for presents? And not just to that hard-to-please nephew, but to your host or hostess. Not that you should make one of your thousand-dollar marionettes and give it away, but one of these commercial puppets. They're a lot more fun than a box of candy. Try it, on a most unlikely prospect. You may be surprised. Of course, for something special, give P of A Memberships.

TOMMY TRENT played the Roxy in New York a while back . . . SID KROFFT was doing his act on skates in December at the Center Theatre in the "Howdy Mr. Ice" show.

Send me the news, folks. "You can't tell the players without a program," and I can't print the programs unless I know what scenes you're in.

What are you doing?

NEWS ABROAD

by MARJORIE B McPHARLIN

Editors the world over seem to be harassed by the same problems. In a recent issue of *The Australian Puppeteer*, W. D. Nicol laments the difficulties of producing a magazine and running an organization with volunteer labor. He remarks, "But the tragedy of all organizations such as ours The Puppet Guild of Australia is that so great possibilities are lost through the inability of volunteers to contribute to the advancement of the cause." Nevertheless, Mr. Nicol has managed to publish in mimeographed form a quite lively number containing an account of Teschner's Mirror Theatre, notes on puppet history, reports on puppet happenings

in all parts of Australia, and international news notes.

At the Royal Show in Sydney last March, Ruth Adams and Peg McLeod produced a play for the Shell Company of Australia. The theme of "Share the Road" was amusingly treated, with Slappy, an irresponsible motorist as chief character. Thousands watched the show. People came again and again. The sergeant of police in charge of the area saw it 35 times. "He became almost embarrassed about it in the end and, if he happened to catch the eye of the Shell men, he would murmur, 'Oh, I'm just looking for one of my offsidiers.' "

In Victoria, two puppet seasons were run by the National Fitness Youth Theatre; the first twelve weeks included **Puss in Boots**, **The Emperor's Nightingale**, **Hansel and Gretel**. For the second season of eight weeks the program was called **Music and Marionettes**; there were variety turns, two plays **Handel**, **the Boy Who Loved Music**, **Rumpelstiltskin**, and a demonstration on how to make and produce a rod-puppet play. Mr. Nicol and Mrs. G. N. Alexander were the directors.

Twelve regular shows were given in the Melbourne Teacher's College Marionette Theatre, and many others done with the travelling theatre in conjunction with hospital schools, parents' associations and other groups.

Considerable interest was aroused at the Junior Red Cross Conference in Melbourne when Mr. Nicol gave a talk on puppetry.

In all parts of Australia individuals and small groups of people are making puppets with all the enthusiasm (and inexperience) of amateurs. Some teach children's classes, some work with library groups, and some with their families.

There are a few old-timers, too. Mr. W. E. Masters of Hobart, Tasmania, has been running a show for many years. Now 76 years old and retired, he still keeps his puppets busy, mostly in the winter. In summer, he sails his boat (the sixteenth he has built in his lifetime) and fishes.

The following note was about Czechoslovakia's Professor Skupa from the London Daily Telegraph, 26 April, 1948 is quoted in **The Australian Puppeteer**: "In 1943 Professor Skupa was imprisoned by the Nazis. His two famous dolls, Hurvinek and Spejbl—as dear to the Czech children as Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck are to our own—were locked up in the criminal archives of the Gestapo headquarters. When Pilsen was liberated in 1945 an American G.I. found the two puppets. He gave them to a little Czech boy. The child immediately recognized them and took them back to the Professor, who had just been released from prison."

You may be interested to know that there are a surprising number of periodicals, both past and present, devoted to puppets. The oldest is **Loutkar** (The Puppeteer) first published in Prague in 1917 and continued to 1939 as the official organ of UNIMA. In 1940 **Loutkova Seena** (The Puppet Stage) became the successor to **Loutkar**, was suspended by the authorities in 1941, and revived in 1945. The last issue I received was in 1947. From 1918-1926 the French organization, **Nos Marionettes**, issued the **Artistique-Revue** while **Les Amis de Guignol** published an **Almanach** from 1922-1939 and the **Bulletin-Trimestriel** from 1926 to about 1945. The June 1949 issue continues the record of Guignol, one of France's most famous puppet characters. In Paris a mimeographed bulletin, **Le Montreur de Marionettes**, is published as the organ of the Union Corporative et Nationale des Montreurs de Marionettes.

There have been a number of good German periodicals, such as **Das Puppentheater** (1925-1931), and **Der Puppenspieler**, published from 1930-1933 and revived in October 1948. A newcomer in puppet publications is **Het Poppenspel**, a mimeographed bulletin from Antwerp. For the benefit of its international readers, summaries of the important articles are given in English, French, and German!

The British Puppet Model Theatre Guild published **News and Notes** from the mid-1920's until the war, during which seventeen Wartime Bulletins were issued (this, with the American **Grapevine** was one of the few publications to continue during the war). In January, 1946 the first number of **The Puppet Master** appeared, a full pledged magazine supplanting the previous bulletins. Then there was our own **Yearbook**, with seventeen years of recounting puppet activities.

The purpose and content of all these periodicals are remarkably similar. They record and illustrate the work of leading puppeteers, offer technical hints, print plays, articles, news and book reviews. Many others besides those mentioned have done their share in telling the story of the puppet theatre during the past thirty years.

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G. T. L.

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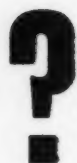
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